

Avoiding a Lawsuit as a Marriage Counselor

Many couples wait until their relationships are strained to consider marriage therapy. In many situations, they are already dealing with anger issues and in some cases violence. Talking through these issues with a marriage therapist is not always a pleasant experience for people, so counselors need to be aware that the anger and violence felt toward each other can easily turn on you, the therapist.

There are several things marriage therapists need to be aware of when providing services for couples who are struggling with their marriage such as: the emotional stress that goes along with couples problems, the stages of depression and how to channel negative energy to focus more on the positive.

As a marriage counselor, you strive to avoid unethical behavior, and to avoid potential lawsuits. Sometimes in the midst of the situation, things are said that aren't meant and reactions happen. If the violence or anger does turn toward you, it may be the right moment to end the session until the couple can calm down and have a civil conversation.

3 Ways to Avoid a Lawsuit as a Marriage Counselor:

1. **Notes & Records:** Proper documentation is an essential part of counseling, and it is tremendously important in marriage counseling. If the actions of a therapist are ever in question, having detailed notes and records will help your defense. It will also make it easier for you to chart the growth and progress of your patients.
2. **Schedule Patient Meetings in Office :** According to defense attorney, [Brandt Cadwill Jr., Esq.](#) unless there is a specific therapeutic purpose, ALL meetings should be held at the office.
3. **Carry Insurance:** In the event a lawsuit does happen, carrying professional liability insurance is the only way to guarantee that your practice and license is protected.

No matter how cautious you may be, you never know when a disgruntled patient may try to make a complaint against you. Don't risk losing your practice and your livelihood. Always keep in mind that your actions may someday be called into question, and be sure to never engage in unethical behavior. You can never be too cautious in counseling, and practicing these three things will help you safeguard yourself against legal claims and complaints against your license.

